A political play from Bolivia

Ravindra Tripathy's

theaterama

***EN UN SOL AMARILLO-*** Photo: Radoslav Pazameta-Lucasninos Cuadro

We, in India, are familiar with South American writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas llyosa and others. But we know very little about theatre of Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and other Latin- American countries. Fortunately, in 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsav there are some plays from these countries which show how lively the theatre scene is there. One can feel the `politics of theatre' in these plays. But it is not only the political component which is important; there is also immense aesthetic depth in these plays. You can say that Latin-American theatre is as lively as its fiction and poetry.

`***En un sol Amarillo***' (**In a yellow sun: memories of an earthquake**) is play in Spanish from Bolivia. Directed by **Cesar Brie**, an eminent Bolivian director, this play is about a natural tragedy that took place in this South-American country. On the night of 22nd may 1998, Bolivia was rocked by a massive earthquake, which devastated many cities and towns. A lot of people became homeless. Children died without proper care. The international community sent all type of aids but the government of Bolivia couldn't distribute it properly and massive misuse of funds aggravated the plight of people. Corruption went rampant. The basic infrastructures were destroyed and remained inbuilt. Those who raised a voice were maimed, misappropriation of fund by the bureaucracy and political class knew no bounds and the victims were mistreated. People died and politicians laughed.

The play is based upon the research and information about this

earthquake and subsequent suffering of the people. So there is a lot of reality here. But this is not only a docu-drama. Here you see reality as well as the imagination, prose as well as poetry and design as well as acting. There is physical theatre and comedy in it also. Interweaving of wit, humor, pathos makes this play a human tragedy. We can see here what is happening not only in Bolivia but all over the world. There are many stories of catastrophe also in India, which are full of administrative lapses, monetary mismanagement and political insensivities. The Indian audience will easily identify with this play. The director of the play, Cesar Brie, had to flee Argentina in 1976 because of dictatorship in that country. He lived and worked in Denmark, Italy and Poland before settling in Bolivia.

Arunachal Pradesh on The Theatre Map of India

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



No doubt, the Hindi language has many local dialects. But have you ever heard of Arunachali Hindi? Yes, it exists. You want to know where it is? It is in Arunachal Pradesh of course. But why is it Arunachali Hindi, it is difficult to say because it is just like standard *khariboli* chaste Hindi. But whatever it is, it was a nice experience to watch the play and listen to the language.

I am talking about `***Drowa Jhagmu: Ek Devi Ki Kahani'*** (Drowa Jhagmu: the story of a goddess). It is a play from Arunachal Pradesh, directed by **Suk Bahadur**, a National School of Drama graduate.

'Drowa Jhagmu: Ek Devi Ki Kahani' is based upon a mythological story of Arunachal Pradesh. A king named Kalawangphu was famous for his violent nature. He loved bloodshed. One day, when he went hunting, his dog got lost somewhere in the forest. While searching for his dog, he met a beautiful woman, who was really a fairy called Drowa Jhagmu. The king wanted to marry her, but Drowa Jhagmu put a condition before him – he will have to shun violence and lead a peaceful life. The king accepts this condition and both of them got married and had two children, a son and a daughter.

Meanwhile the king's first wife returned (she had gone somewhere for a long time). Seeing the new queen and her two children she becomes furious and plots a conspiracy. The king is dethroned and arrested. The fairy returns to her world, the two children had to hide themselves from the first queen, who acquires all the power. But at the end, all goes well. The son becomes the king with the help of his fairy mother. He rescues his father, the first queen, who is the conspirator is dethroned and killed. The daughter, who is a grown up woman, also joins her brother and father.

The director uses the local Aunachali dance forms; *yak dance*, *aji lhamu dance*, pantomimes and mask dances to weave the production. The actors did their hard work, although there is

need of more refinement in the area of voice modulation. It is a good thing that Arunachal Pradesh is coming on the theatre map of India.

Ram Janmabhoomi Vs Babri Masjid

The dispute, as is well known, is that some Hindu organisations claimed that the mosque known as **Babri Masjid** in Ayodhya, a town in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, was built by Mir Baqi, a general of Emperor Babar, in 1528 after demolishing a grand temple on the spot, that marked the birthplace of Lord Ram – the most important incarnation of *Vishnu* in the Hindu belief system. So, while the Hindus wanted to remove the mosque from the spot and build a Ram temple there, some Muslim organisations disputed the legitimacy of the Hindu claim. In the independent India, the matter has been in the courts since 1950. The mosque was destroyed on 06th December 1992 when a political rally developed into a riot involving 150,000 people. The report of Liberhan Commission, appointed on 16th December 1992 to investigate the demolition of Babri mosque, was tabled in the Indian parliament on 24th November 2009 and it has listed people responsible for the demolition of the mosque, indicting some very senior political figures of India.

No doubt, the manner the disputed structure called Babri Mosque was demolished on 06th December 1992 was wrong. The organisers of the rally on the day had promised to the Union Government and gave an undertaking to the Supreme Court of India that the structure would not be harmed. After giving

that undertaking, the act of demolishing the mosque, that too in front of the world television cameras, was unacceptable. It left the Muslim community in India with a feeling of a gross excess and insult, and it belittled the Indian State.

However, the crude nature of the events on 06th December 1992 should not blind us to the truth of history and propriety. As this writer has argued in another article published in this magazine, where some Hindu groups were the guilty party, no one has the right to attack others' places of worship. And if it has been done by someone in the past, mature and civilized behaviour requires that it should be apologised for, and the mistakes rectified. As the Liberhan Commission acknowledges, Ayodhya is of special importance to Hindus. Justice MS Liberhan makes the observation:

"This Place had become emotive issue owing to its position as the birth place of Ram, a theme present in every facet of the culture, connecting the past with the present & the future." (*Report of the Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry,*para 9.5, p. 24)

The Muslim groups at the forefront of this dispute contend that there are provisions in the Quran, according to which no mosque can be constructed at someone's place of worship. So, this mosque could not have been built by destroying a temple.

Well, the history does not support this argument.

No historian disagrees with the fact that the Shiva Temple at Somnath was destroyed several times by Muslim invaders and rulers, starting with the plunder of its treasures by Mahmoud of Gazni in 1024, and finally by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1701, who also built a mosque on the spot. There is incontrovertible evidence that 27 temples were dismantled to construct the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque in the Kutub Minar complex. Many parts of the Dilwara Jain Temples complex were destroyed by successive Muslim rulers. The Kashi Vishwanath

Temple in Varanasi was demolished four times by Muslim invaders and rulers. Anyone who has visited the site can make out how brazenly the so-called Gyanvapi Mosque is built upon the temple complex to humiliate the Hindu community.

What happened in Somnath, Delhi, Dilwara and Varanasi did happen at many other places. According to some historians, more than 3000 temples have been destroyed and replaced by mosques by Muslim rulers in India.

Regarding the origin of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, after 17 years of his study, Justice Liberhan concludes that ***"the construction of the mosque by Mir Baqi in 1528 is now an admitted fact."*** (*ibid,* para 18.9, p 62).

And, there is plethora of evidence to show that the Babri mosque was constructed after destroying a Ram temple on the spot.

The available records of the Ayodhya dispute in government documents go back to the middle of the 19th century. According to British sources, Hindus and Muslims used to worship together in the Babri Mosque complex, earlier called *Masjid-e-Janamsthan*, for hundreds of years until about 1855. The then Commissioner of Faizabad, P Carnegy, wrote in 1870: *"It is said that up to that time (viz. the Hindu-Muslim clashes in the 1850s) the Hindus and Mohamedans alike used to worship in the mosque temple."* As quoted in a BBC Urdu Service programme, *Meezan*, broadcast on 11th December 1990, earlier in 1861, giving detailed description of Ayodhya in his book, *Historical Sketch of Faizabad Tehsil, including the Former Capital of Ayodhya and Faizabad*, Mr Carnegy had written: ***"It seems there was a grand temple at this place, and in 1528, during his stay in Ayodhya, Babar ordered the destruction of that temple."***

The matter first reached the British courts in 1885-86. Efforts in 1883 to construct a temple on Ram *chabootra*

(platform) situated in the complex were halted by the Deputy Commissioner who prohibited it on 19th January 1885. Raghubir Das, a *Mahant* (head priest), filed a suit before Faizabad Sub-Judge Pandit Harikishan seeking permission to construct the temple on this *chabootra* measuring 17 ft x 21 ft. The Sub-Judge, though agreed with Raghubir Das's contention that it was Ram's birth-place, but dismissed the suit. An appeal was filed in the court of Faizabad District Judge Colonel JEA Chambiar. On 18th March 1886, Col Chambiar passed an order in which he wrote: ***"I visited the land in dispute yesterday in the presence of all parties. I found that the Masjid built by Emperor Babar stands on the border of Ayodhya, that is to say, to the west and south. It is clear of habitants. It is most unfortunate that Masjid should have been built on the land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that event occurred 358 years ago it is too late now to remedy the grievance."***

Again, while rejecting the subsequent appeal filed by Raghubir Das on 25th May 1886 before him, the Judicial Commissioner of Awadh, W Young, wrote in his judgement on 01st November 1886: ***"The place where the permission to build the temple is being asked for is situated in a premises that has got a mosque which came into existence because of discrimination and religious repression by an emperor who chose this place for the mosque with total disregard for the Hindus' faith. The access available to the Hindus for entering the mosque is very narrow, and for years they have been trying to get proper facilities for their entrance, and they want to construct two buildings in the premises – one, Sita's Kitchen, and the other, Ramchandra's birth-place."***

As Rashid Ashraf, the producer and presenter of the BBC Urdu Service programme, concludes, though the permission to construct a temple was refused and the Hindus and Muslims continued to worship alongside each other in that complex, it

was through this court case that the British judges accepted the Hindu claim that it was the birth place of Lord Ram.

Afterwards, writing in the Faizabad District Gazetteer in 1905, HR Neville made it totally clear that the *Janmasthan* temple *"was destroyed by Babar and replaced by a mosque."* Mr Neville wrote: ***"The Janmasthan was in Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. In 1528 AD Babar came to Ayodhya and halted here for a week. He destroyed the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque, still known as Babar's mosque. The materials of the old structure (i.e., the temple) were largely employed, and many of the columns were in good preservation."*** (HR Neville, Faizabad District Gazetteer, Lucknow, 1905, pp 172-177, cited by Harsh Narain*The Ayodhya Temple Mosque Dispute: Focus on Muslim Sources*, Penman Publications, New Delhi, 1993).

Thus, after investigating the site and relevant historical documents several times, the British officials and judges agreed that the so-called Babri mosque was constructed on the spot where a Ram temple stood before it.

As opposed to the clear judgements given by the British judges, the courts in the independent India have decided to sit on the matter for ever. Four civil suits regarding the title of **Ram *Janmabhoomi*** have been filed in the district court of Faizabad, the first one being filed in 1950. After 40 years, in 1989 these cases were transferred to theLucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. Since then another twenty years have passed, and no judgement has been made so far. In fact, judges are often quoted as saying that they are not capable of deciding a historical event.

Actually, the most important question is – What are these courts deciding now when twice the British judges had accepted the Hindu claim more than one hundred years ago!

Unable to decide the matter themselves, in 2003 the Lucknow

Bench asked the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to conduct a more in-depth study and an excavation to ascertain the type of structure that was beneath the rubble.

The ASI team was headed by an archaeologist of international repute, BB Lal, who had earlier worked for UNESCO committees and served as President of the World Archaeological Congress. The ASI report indicated proof of a 10th century temple under the mosque. In the words of ASI researchers, they discovered ***"distinctive features associated with… temples of north India"***. The excavations yielded: ***"stone and decorated bricks as well as mutilated sculpture of a divine couple and carved architectural features, including foliage patterns, amalaka, kapotapali, doorjamb with semi-circular shrine pilaster, broke octagonal shaft of black schist pillar, lotus motif, circular shrine having pranjala (watershute) in the north and 50 pillar bases in association with a huge structure"*** *(Evidence of temple found: ASI,* The Tribune, August 26, 2003)

However, as the findings of the ASI were not to their liking, the Muslim groups termed the ASI report as "prepared under political pressure". Zaffaryab Jilani, the counsel of the Sunni Central Waqf Board, said: ***"The ASI has filed a saffron report"***.

Firstly, it is insulting to the integrity of a world renowned archaeologist like BB Lal, who headed the ASI survey. If the Muslim groups do not accept the authenticity of the ASI, one wonders which institution of India they do really respect! The question is, if the ASI is accused of preparing its report under the influence of the Hindu parties, under what political pressure P Carnegy, Colonel JEA Chambiar, W Young and HR Neville made their statements and judgements! The findings of the ASI in 2003 only corroborated the statement made by HR Neville a century ago, as quoted above.

It is because of this *Main-Na-Maanu (I-will-not-agree)* attitude of the Muslim groups that the Indian courts find

themselves unable to decide the matter. Actually, it is not that all Muslims are against restoration of Ram and Krishna temples. First of all, Shia Muslim organisations have expressed no objection to the Ram Temple. Then, a lot of other Muslim organisations and ordinary Muslims, irrespective of the denomination they belong to, have expressed their support to the construction of Ram temple. The so-called Muslim groups opposed to the restoration of the Ram Temple and other important Indian symbols are dominated by people who actually should have no place in post-partition secular India. For instance, Syed Shahabuddin, the leader of the so-called Babri Mosque Action Committee, is the same person who raised the demand to ban Salman Rushdie's book in India, has been demanding *Shariat* for the Indian Muslims, and championed the Islamist cause in Shah Bano case – denying matrimony to divorced Muslim women. Similarly, Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi was the same person whose followers have been indulging in violence against Taslima Nasreen and compare Shabana Azmi to prostitutes, and whose party opposed Hyderabad joining India. These people might be living in India, but actually they are soul-mates of the Taliban.

And, rather than being respectfully persuaded to accept the truth and act reasonably, these hard-line Muslim groups are actually being encouraged in their intransigence by the self-professed "secular" politicians and intellectuals of India. 'Secular' is the Indian equivalent of the Western concept of 'non-racist', and as per the current Indian definition, one is "secular" only if one agrees with Muslim fundamentalists! So, politicians like Mulayam Singh and Lalu Prasad, who openly play casteist and racist politics, are very "secular" because of their proclamations that 'a Muslim can do no wrong'.

While the Indian courts express inability to arbitrate in the dispute, in the independentIndia the people who have arrogated themselves to decide the issue are the Marxist historians of the JNU. One such historian is Prof Ram Sharan Sharma, who

writes,***"Ayodhya seems to have emerged as a place of religious pilgrimage in medieval times. Although chapter 85 of the Vishnu Smriti lists as many as fifty-two places of pilgrimage, including towns, lakes, rivers, mountains, etc., it does not include Ayodhya in this list."***

Now, the way Prof Sharma quotes *Vishnu Smriti*, it sounds like *Manu Smriti* that every Hindu should be familiar with. By quoting little known book, Prof Sharma wants to prove that Ayodhya is not significant in the eyes of the Hindus! One would like to ask Prof Sharma, as per his research how many Hindus consult *Vishnu Smriti* before embarking on a pilgrimage! I'm over fifty, and I certainly had never heard of this "great" *Smriti* before my research for this article. As regards, Prof Sharma's assertion of Ayodhya emerging as a place of pilgrimage in medieval times, according to the Cambridge dictionary, medieval times is the period in European history from about 600 AD to 1500 AD. If Prof Sharma accepts this definition, how does it prove that there was no temple in Ayodhya in 1528? If anything, it only gives credence to the Hindu claim that the temple destroyed by Babar was constructed by Garhwal king Govindachandra (1114–1154).

Prof Sharma also says that Tulsidas, who wrote *Ramcharitmanas* in 1574 at Ayodhya, does not mention it as a place of pilgrimage. This suggests that there was no significant Hindu temple at the site of the Babri Mosque.

This is the most ridiculous argument. Bethlehem wasn't the place of pilgrimage before the time of Jesus Christ's birth. As normal, Ayodhya developed into a place of pilgrimage after the event, while *Ramcharitmanas* is written in the present form, set in Ram's time. Actually, not only is this the most ridiculous argument, it is an attempt to misrepresent Tulsidas and falsify Indian mythology. *Ramcharitmanas* is divided into seven sections. And, out of seven sections, Tulsidas devotes one full section to Ayodhya, called *Ayodhya Kaand*, and celebrates the beauty of Ayodhya at many other places in the

book. What could have been a better way of describing Ayodhya as a place of pilgrimage!

Prof Sharma ignores the basic fact that the classic Sanskrit text *Ramayan* by Maharishi Balmiki is the ultimate authentic source of Ram's story, and it celebrates Ayodhya as the birthplace of Ram and its grandeur as the capital of Ram's kingdom.

Another Marxist historian Romila Thapar says, ***"If we do not take Hindu mythology in account the first historical description of the city dates back recently to the 7th century, when the Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang observed there were 20 Buddhist temples with 3000 monks at Ayodhya, amongst a large Hindu population. In 1528, nobles under Mughal emperor Babur constructed a mosque over the disputed site. The mosque, called the Babri Masjid, has become a source of contention for some Hindus. At the end of the 19th century, Ayodhya contained 96 Hindu temples and 36 Muslim mosques. Little local trade was carried on, but the great Hindu fair of Ram Navami held every year was attended by about 500,000 people".***

The question is – why we should not take the Hindu mythology into account? Can we respect Greece, while ignoring the Greek mythology! Can one understand the history ofEurope without taking Christianity into account? Or can we understand the Arab world without taking Islam into account? The Hindu mythology is the base of what the world calls Indian culture and civilization. Hinduism and India are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate the two. In many languages of Europe, the word for Indian is Hindu. Or does Ms Thapar believe Hindu mythology is all a myth? Ram's life and Ram's birthplace is a myth? Ms Thapar should explain why half a million people would gather in Ayodhya every year. Does it not mean anything!

In fact, the only myths that are being created are by the self-professed Marxist historians who are spreading the ideas

that Babar was an Indian! Ibrahim Lodhi and Alauddin Khilji were indigenous rulers! Well, they were as much indigenous rulers as the Viking and Norman rulers in England, as much as the Dutch and French rulers inIndia! No one can deny the fact that Babar came all the way from Ferghana (in present day Uzbekistan) and invaded India in 1526 after crossing Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, andAfghanistan. Even if he didn't construct a mosque at Ram's birthplace, could any of these "intellectuals" tell us what business Babar had to launch unprovoked attacks on Indian kingdoms and murder thousands of innocent people!

Marxists are supposed to side with the victim and fight against present and historical injustice. And, it is historians' duty to pursue the truth, no matter how ugly it is. But Indian Marxist historians have decided to side with an invader, who did everything in his might to crush the local culture and impose a foreign religion and language on India! Quoting an obscure piece of religious literature and misrepresenting the classic texts to justify the imposition of a foreign culture on a people is not great pursuit of truth, but intellectual dishonesty! In the face of overwhelming historical and archaeological evidence, clutching to straws and denying the oppression is not scientific socialism, but rationalising cowardice!

Had these historians been really pursuing truth, they would have tried to find where the missing pages of *Babarnama* are and who is responsible for those pages gone missing. The Marxist historians have made no attempt to find another book that went suddenly missing in most libraries in India. It was *Hindustan Islami Ahad Mein* (India Under Islamic Resolve) by Maulana Hakim Saiyid Abdul Hai, which like the original *Babarnama*is stated to include a chapter that described the demolition of the Ram *Janmabhoomi*and other temples. Instead, these people find solace in siding with the invader and the oppressor. And, these "secular intellectuals" are totally

silent to the findings of the ASI in 2003.

These “intellectuals” do not want to know the truth. They fear truth and justice. They call those who speak the truth and seek redress to the past repression communalists and racists!

White Man went all over the world with sword in one hand and the Bible in the other. The native communities of Africa, Asia, Australia and America were colonized, economically exploited and culturally suppressed. Indigenous religious beliefs were dubbed as mumbo-jumbo and Christianity was imposed on the people. Europeans imposed their culture on the Native American Indians. Now, if the Native American Indians demand that they want to retrieve a few symbols of their past culture, would we call them racists! Hindu is nothing else, but a person who maintains a connection with the pre-Islamic Indian culture. They are a defeated people at the hands of Muslim invaders. Now, when the Hindus are asking for retrieving some symbols of their ancient culture, which were crushed by the invaders, there is nothing communalist or racist about it. On the contrary, those who want to deny the vanquished the right to retrieve symbols of their past culture are actually siding with oppression. Love for the relic of Indian defeat and a symbol of invader’s triumphalism is perverted secularism!

We should be mature enough to understand that the struggle against the excesses committed by Muslim invaders or rulers, or by Hindu and British rulers for that matter, does not mean a fight or hatred against the communities those rulers came from, or even against their descendents. Peace and harmony in the society is essential. But falsifying history cannot achieve true harmony. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that we do not bind ourselves in falsehood. The truth of history should never be obscured or denied.

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A Witty Out of the Box Solution to End Corruption and Tax Evasion

The governments in the US and many European countries are very concerned, and very rightly so, about the problem of tax-evasion. Many of these governments have been pursuing some of the Swiss banks for information on their citizens who have deposited stolen tax money there, and some countries have even been engaged in heated discussions with the Swiss government regarding the secrecy surrounding the issue. In the developing countries, people and politicians talk about the rampant corruption in their bureaucracy, and the need to get rid of it. But everyone seems helpless and no effective step is taken to tackle the problem.

Well, the solution to these problems is quite at hand.

The problem of corruption, tax evasion and many other socio-economic problems can be solved totally by adopting banking cards as the only mode of payments. Abolition of currency notes and coins would abolish all illegal, corrupt, and dishonest practices. The evidence of illegal trading, illegal work, smuggling, drug pedaling, human trafficking and other socio-economic crimes would straightaway be available to the enforcement authorities.

As every customer would be paying through their banking cards, no business would be able to hide any transactions and under-report their sales. And, as the businesses would be making payments to their suppliers and employees also from their business banking accounts using the banking cards, there would

be record of all their purchases, and there would be no chance of false invoices or receipts being submitted. This would solve the problem of under-payment of the VAT/Sales Tax and the income tax.

Under that system, not only no tax evasion can take place, the black money sitting in the Swiss banks (and in other foreign countries) would also be forced to return to the country. That money cannot be brought back in the form of currency notes to the country any more. It would be rendered worthless unless brought back through the duly recognized banking system. And, no one can bring any money into their bank account without having an explanation for that and paying all the dues on it. So, rather than letting their money being rendered worthless, the past tax-cheats would prefer to bring it back to their country and pay the dues to their government. Like the speed cameras, different filters on bank accounts would do the IRS/HMRC inspectors' work. Whenever any unusual amount of money (eg, black money presently sitting in the form of piles of currency notes, or money coming from a foreign country) enters a bank account, a filter would trigger an alert which would be received by the enforcement authorities who then can probe the matter.

The system would also squash the problem of illegal immigration. No business would be able to employ an illegal immigrant, because there would be no "cash" to pay a person who is not entitled to work in the country. Now the records of paying workers' wages would be in the business's bank account. So, who would dare to employ an illegal immigrant! Bank accounts could have NI numbers on them. Illegal immigrants would no longer be able to breathe in the system.

Professional thieves would look for some other honest professions. Most of the thieves steal to resell those goods. But selling a good that was not obtained in a legitimate way through a bank account would simply mean inviting prison sentence. Even the potential buyers of stolen

goods would be deterred by the fact that their purchase would get recorded in their bank accounts. Thus professional thefts would just vanish.

Similarly, it would be so easy to catch drug paddlers and human traffickers. Even fraudsters would not be able to get very far. It would be easy to retrieve the money lost through frauds, as it would be sitting just as an entry in another bank account.

The days of banks being robbed and people being mugged for money would become history.

There would be no queues in the banks for getting cash or depositing cash. There would be no need to visit a bank for day-to-day transactions. One would need to visit a bank only to open or close an account, or get some advice. The banks would not need big premises. Their staffing needs would also go down, and so their costs. So, the fee they charge from their customers should also be much less. Certainly, they would be able to afford that the payments up to a certain amount, let's say $200/£100/Rs 1000, attract no charge. Thus the banking system would be more efficient and less costly.

In a country like India, there would be another enormous benefit. No government official would be able to take a bribe – not even a penny. They would have only one personal account at one point of time. Any money coming into their account would get recorded. Every government official's (and their family members') bank accounts should have automatic filters. The moment they get any money coming into their account from any source other than their employer, they would be asked to explain that.

There would be immense benefits to the society, and it would reduce cutting the forests.

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INDIA ’S ONLY MULTI-TOWN CHILDREN’S FILM FESTIVAL ENCOURAGES KIDS A Report by our roving Critic BB Nagpal from Bengaluru



Bengaluru: The 5th International Children’s Film Festival, the only one of its kind in the country in terms of its reach, closed earlier with all participants emphasizing the importance of making meaningful films that were entertaining and yet sent subtle messages that the young could understand.

A major effect of the festival was the large number of children who said they wanted training to be able to make animation and live action filmsfor the young.

Karnataka Secretary for Kannada, Culture and Information B R Jayaramaraje Urs said the very fact that several thousand children from more than fifty schools had attended the festival, and the fact that it had been held in five towns and cities of the state simultaneously, showed how popular children's films could be.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the Festival, he promised all help from the state for promotion of children's cinema in the state and said the Government was actively considering the subsidy for children's films from two to four films every year. At present, two films get Rs 2.5 million each per year.

Others present at the closing ceremony included Mr A R Raju who is a former Vice-President of the Film Federation of India, the popular starRamesh Arvind who stole many hearts with his presence and antics on the stage, and director V Manohar. They made a plea to parents to ensure the young got to see good films and said it was necessary for the government or the exhibition sector to make arrangements for such screenings.

The Festival organized by the non-governmental Children's India in five different towns and cities in Karnataka was aimed at ensuring that children even in remote places got to see good films. The Festival was held simultaneously at Bangalore, Tumkur, Davangere, Bijapur andHampi (Hospet). The District Commissioners along with local NGOs supported the Festival at all the venues outside Bengaluru and ensured greater participation of children.

Several foreign delegates had attended the Festival. They included Mr Gerardo Nieto who is Director of the Carthagena International Film Festival in Colombia, Bangladesh filmmaker Khalid Mehmood Mithu along with his children Arjo Shrestho and Shiropa Purna who are also filmmakers in their own right, Italian filmmaker Giuseppe Varlotta, and Anis Ben Mohammed who is in charge of International Affairs in the International

Film Festival for Children and Youth in Tunisia.

Mr Urs also released the souvenir of the Festival, which apart from giving details of the Festival and having several articles on children's cinema, also has messages of the President Pratibha Patil, Karnataka Governor MrRameshwar Thakur who had inaugurated the Festival, Karnataka Information Minister Mr Katta Subramanya Naidu, and Children's Film Society, India, Chief Executive Officer Kuldeep Sinha who was the Guest of Honour at the inauguration. The Festival was also attended by Andhra Pradesh Children's Film Society Chairman M Vedakumar.

In a surprise announcement, Mr Anis announced a proposal for a co-production between Colombia , Italy , Tunisia and India for a children's film.

Mr N R Nanjunde Gowda, founder of Children's India , called upon children who had ideas to come forward the way Master Kishen or the two children from Bangladesh were doing. He said his organization would annually organize a workshop for children on filmmaking.

Master Likhit, who has won the Karnataka State Best Child Actor awardfor his role in the film 'Naanu Gandhi' was felicitated on the occasion. The film's director Nanjunde Gowda earlier received an award from Carthagena International Film Festival in Colombia Gerardo Nieto in the Children's films (education) category.

The main inauguration by Karnataka Governor had taken place in Tumkur, around 70 km from here, in the presence of Dr Shivakumar Swamiji of Shri Siddaganga Mutt, Tumkur, Karnataka Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs Suresh Kumar, Mr Kuldeep Sinha, KFCC Vice-President Rockline Venkatesh and actress Mrs Shruti Mahender, among others.

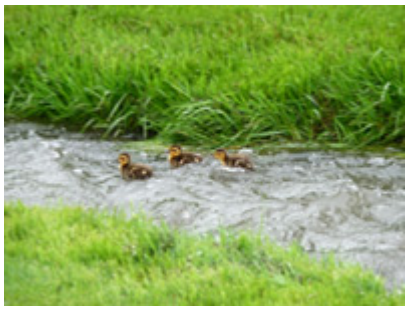
More than forty films from over ten countries including India had been screened at all the venues in the five towns and

cities. A seminar on the future of children's cinema in the age of television, and Open Forum discussions with all the delegates and directors from India and overseas, were also held during the Festival.

The Festival had special packages from Colombia and Bangladesh apart from films from Italy , Iran , Germany , Sri Lanka , Tunisia , China , the United States and other countries. The Festival also paid a tribute to seventy-five years of Kannada cinema with the screening of nine acclaimed children's films. There was also a package of films from the Children's Film Society , India , in Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Marathi,Manipuri, English and Kannada.

The Children's India was launched by Mr Gowda in 2005 to empower and expose young minds to theatre, performing arts, training workshops on animation and various other creative pursuits.

Are You A Happy Camper? by Sharon Moist



What makes you happy? I mean really, truly happy. Have you ever given any thought to what makes you the kind of *"jumping*

for joy, singing in the rain” happy, that leaves you grinning from ear to ear for no apparent reason?

When I was younger, it was material things: new shoes; a new purse; the latest CD by my favorite musician, a new car. You get the picture.

Now, it’s the simple things in life: spending quality time with my parents’; good conversations with friends; great water pressure in the shower; playing with a puppy; nicely fragranced soap; spending the summer at my home in Montana (where I am even as you read this); grapefruit scented candles; a beautiful garden of wild flowers; new baby ducks learning to swim in the stream off my dining room patio (see the enclosed picture); a really good thunderstorm; jumping in a really big rain puddle afterwards. Those are the things that truly put a smile on my face today.

What about you? What’s on your list?

In today’s fast-paced world, it’s so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day stress of our lives that we forget to stop and enjoy the little things that make life so wonderful.

So now, after you’re done reading this article, I would challenge you sit down and make a list of those things that make you truly happy – and I’m willing to bet that they aren’t material things.

Then, when life becomes a little too crazy or too stressful to handle, pick an item on your “Happy List” and take the time to enjoy it – even if it’s just for a few minutes. You’ll be amazed at how great you feel during the rest of the day.

The Most Magnificent Palace in the East: The Red Fort of Shah Jahan, the King of the World – A lecture delivered at the ATTIC, New Delhi By Anisha Shekhar Mukherji

Good Evening. I would like to begin my talk today on the Red Fort of Delhi, once called '*The Most Magnificent Palace in the East*', with an image, which most of us present here—if not *all* of us—will instantly recognize. In fact, so would four year old children across the country who have just entered formal school!

This image is a part of the Red Fort's outer walls. the Lahori Gate, to be precise, atop which the Indian Flag proudly waves. Each Independence Day, it is this view of the Fort that we salute, that is telecast through the country and routinely printed on the front pages of our newspapers. Ironically, however, this overwhelming focus on the Red Fort *as a national icon* bound so inseparably with the identity of independent India and its struggle for freedom against British rule, has actually directed attention *away* from its unique design. A design which has inspired at different times and varying levels, all manner of art and architecture within and beyond the Mughal Empire. Sikh religious buildings, Rajput palaces, residences of noblemen and of ordinary people.

Nonetheless today, despite the fact that the '*Lal Quila*' is so deeply symbolic of not just Delhi but also of India, used to

advertise products from Basmati rice to restaurants in Soho in London; for many of us the 15th August view is all there is to the Red Fort. We literally and figuratively stop short at its Lahori Gate, rarely bothering to proceed within it or wonder about its long and chequered historical existence. For instance, how many of us realise that even the familiar view with the mound and the ramparts from where the Prime Minister addresses the nation, is actually the *antithesis* of the Fort's original design?! The original entrance to the Lahori Gate built **three hundred and fifty years ago** in the reign of the 5th Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, was straight and open to view. It was not hidden by a wall or by a mound, in keeping with Shah Jahan's actual and metaphorical accessibility to his people. The outer wall in front of the Lahori Gate which we see today in fact, reverses the very notion of the Fort's original function and appearance. This wall as well as that in front of the other main public Gateway into the Fort, the Delhi Gate was made on the orders of Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzeb, shortly after he defeated his brothers in the battle for the Mughal Throne, and imprisoned his ailing father at the Agra Fort. Shah Jahan is reported to have then written to him, "Dear Son, you have made the Fort a bride and put a veil upon her face.."

All representations of the Fort since then, whether in drawings of 19th century Delhi that we just saw, or the Delhi Tourism's official calendars in the 20th century, have been defined by this forbidding veil in front of its public Gateways, which was made even more opaque by the British during their takeover of the Fort. This occurred in 1857, a little more than two hundred years after the founding of the Fort. I would like to draw aside this veil, which has obscured not just the physical view of the Red Fort's interior, but also changed its relationship with its city of Shahjahanabad, and take you within the huge Fort today. To revisit the spaces

in it and give you some idea of what it contained originally, what it symbolized in the Mughal way of life, why the pioneering British historian-explorer James Fergusson termed it the most magnificent palace in the East, what is its relevance today and how it should be regarded and conserved. This understanding of the Fort that I am going to present has been pieced together after sifting through the various depictions of its past existences available today including the Mughal dynasty's court routine recorded in official court chronicles and Mughal miniature paintings, and personal diaries of individuals associated with the Fort, European travelogues, photographs and drawings and after studying the original Mughal structures that presently exist in the Fort. Interestingly, a map dating from the eighteenth century exists in the Oriental and India Office Collection at the British Library manner in which they exist today, with the original configuration.



The built structures have been shaded black in the plans of the Fort, before and after the destruction. A photograph of the area from the top of Jama Masjid shortly after the demolition also shows the empty spaces around the Fort, making it an island severed of its connecting links to Shahjahanabad.

TO BE CONTINUED…

Are You an Open or Closed Book? by: Sharon Moist



Are you open to learning something you already know? They say that “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” But what about people? Do you think it’s possible to teach someone something new, even if they feel like they already know it?

My father is a voracious reader, reading the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal every day, along with the stacks of books he has by his bedside. You see, my dad’s of the belief that just one good idea is the worth the price of the book. That philosophy has now stuck with me; thus the stacks of books alongside my own bed, as well! (In fact, I swear that between the two of us, we could open our own library!)

When I first started out in my career, I was always buying whatever acting book caught my eye. Yes, I probably had 2 or 3 others on the same subject already, but if I didn’t have this particular book, I would add it to my collection. Why? Because a new book often gave me a different point of view – especially if it was written from a different author.

For example: Right now I have about 4 or 5 books in my library, from different casting directors, on the casting process. Now some people may say, “Well, wouldn’t one book do the trick?” And my response would have to be “No” because there are hundreds of casting directors out there, all with different thoughts, opinions and processes they use in casting a project. Therefore, if I just read one book, from one casting director, I could (potentially) miss out on information from another casting director that may actually help me land a job. Make sense?

The same situation applies to workshops. I recently attended a workshop on marketing, and as I introduced myself to the two people sitting next to me, I experienced two very different conversations. The gentleman on my right told me that this was the third workshop he had attended this year on marketing, and that he was really enjoying these workshops because even though he knew most of this information already, he had gotten a couple of new ideas that he was now using in his business and these ideas had already doubled his rate of return – in effect more than covering the cost of the workshop and all of his travel expenses.

Next, I spoke with the woman on my left, and she, too, told me that she already knew all of this information. She also told me that the only reason she was there was because it was another tax deduction for her business and it was a great way to play hooky for a few days without having to do any work.

Two very different people with two very different mindsets, and I would be willing to bet that you could guess which of these two people had a successful career and which one did not.

Remember: All it takes is one really great idea to change your life, and when it comes to your acting career, the one question you need to ask yourself is this:

Am I open to learning something I think I already know?

Only you can answer that question.

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The Spirit of the Running Spirit By Neville Tuli



We did it, I did it. Mind has overwhelmed matter, delusions outlasted reasons.

I completed the half marathon at 9:14am, 21km in 2.30hrs, having never run more than 10km in my life, so pushing oneself beyond oneself as have thousands of others. One imagined the lungs and breathe would collapse first but the legs turned out

more wobbly, after all I am a ‘veteran’ according to the marathon category, and childhood football probably took a greater toll than imagined.

It is unlikely that many would be able to have run the half marathon and have the stamina or will to go and write a few words to share with strangers, within the hour, but this need to write a few words finally became my motivation to finish the race (at the 14km point I think).

So many times the body was packing up, the knees crying, yet we dug deeper, and the body moved forward, and the mind tried to motivate itself to plug on. Initially I thought the run would be a good time for quiet introspection, to think clearly about all the issues which constitute one’s infrastructure-building responsibilities. Yet, after the motivational start with Rocky’s ‘Eye of the Tiger’ the first two km seemed so very tough, as if even six will not be reached.

As we moved into the third km only Prithviraj from Osian’s seemed capable of sustaining the journey. My Delhi staff seemed keen but had little clue about what 21km implies, but they came and competed with themselves, and are strengthened for the next challenge. After the first three km the breathe had already dried and there seemed to be no chance of completing this race by running, to walk seemed inevitable, but the mind naturally said not yet, at least reach six before your first walking step.

Then I saw a man pass me who was probably the age of what my father would have been today, and I smiled, so receiving another dose of energy. Quietly the mind kept focused, recognizing that all the strength lies within, that one has pushed on a daily basis for the last fifteen years, and so it will automatically happen now. When the legs and lungs tire, the mind will shout: not now, there is so much within, stores of energy you cannot see,

MOBILE PHONES ENABLE HIGHER AND MORE INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH





Mobile Phone on Bike (L) A Villager on Mobile (R)

19 January 2009, Delhi: A report on the socio-economic impact of mobile technology by a team of researchers led by Professor Rajat Kathuria of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) has found clear evidence to suggest that mobile penetration facilitates economic growth. It shows that Indian states with 10% higher mobile phone penetration will enjoy an annual average growth rate 1.2% higher than those with a lower teledensity.

Funded by Vodafone as part of a series of studies on the socio-economic impact of mobile (SIM), the report demonstrates that mobiles aid the process by which disadvantaged groups, including the low-skilled labour force, enjoy the fruits of economic growth.

Professor Kathuria, commented “We believe this analysis shows

that telecommunications is a critical building block for the country's economic development. Our work also shows that the real benefits of telecommunications only start when a region passes a threshold penetration rate of about 25%. Many areas have still not attained that level, which indicates the importance of increasing teledensity as soon as possible. If Bihar's mobile penetration rates were similar to those of Punjab, for example, then it would enjoy a growth rate that is 4% higher than its current rate.

" A good example of the positive impact of mobile use is a henna artist who began by setting-up-shop on the pavement and now runs a successful and growing concern. He arranges his business via a mobile phone, using it to order products, take bookings and record his designs for marketing purposes.

The report also contains specific studies of how mobile devices benefit rural farmers, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the populations of urban slums. The research also showed that information via mobile, such as weather reports and market prices, has begun to have an impact on productivity for the agricultural sector. However, it also concludes that other infrastructure challenges, such as poor roads and lack of refrigerated transport, need to be addressed in parallel in order for farmers to realise the full potential of access to information via mobile.

Dr Rajiv Kumar, Director and Chief Executive of ICRIER, suggests that the research report should provide government with the analytical and empirical content to refresh the policy environment for telecommunications. He believes that this is vital in order to attract investment to the sector and to ensure this investment is used to maximum effect. In particular, he recommends that more spectrum should be made available for civilian use and policy makers should consider changing the current caps on foreign investment and the criteria for mergers and acquisitions. These changes could stimulate greater investment in Indian telecommunications,

improve access to communication in poorer areas and ultimately lead to increased economic growth.

“India has a lower teledensity than many other emerging economies including China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. We also lag far behind in terms of internet access,” said Dr Kumar. “It is therefore particularly important that in these challenging times we step up to the mark and create the appropriate regulatory environment to attract investment and sustain a world class telecommunications service. Our global competitiveness depends on this.

” The research highlighted that while mobile connections were growing at rates exceeding 10 million per month in 2008, there is considerable penetration variation within India’s borders; Delhi’s penetration rate is in excess of 100% but states such as Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Madhya Pradesh have not yet reached the critical 25% threshold. In addition, access to the internet is only around 5% nationally and in some states, such as Bihar, this figure falls to 0.1%.

Neil Gough, Director of Public Policy – Emerging Markets at Vodafone Group said, “We are pleased to have been able to fund this important study. As a company, we believe that public debate of these issues is fundamental to the development of effective regulation.

The research demonstrates that access to telecommunications acts as a catalyst to realise productivity and efficiency improvements, thereby making it possible for the benefits of economic growth to be shared amongst a greater proportion of the population.” This press release contains forward looking statements which are subject to uncertainty because they depend on circumstances that will occur in the future. No assurances can be given that these statements will be realised.